

**From:** [Prince-Wheeler, Latriece R.](#)  
**To:** [Sanders, Karen M., MD \(VHACO\)](#)  
**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] Fwd: Important - Academic Affiliations SECVA Letter  
**Date:** Friday, March 31, 2017 7:43:53 AM  
**Attachments:** Scanned from a Xerox Multifunction Device.pdf

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**From:** Jerris Hedges [mailto:jerris@hawaii.edu]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 31, 2017 2:40 AM  
**To:** Shulkin, David J., MD  
**Cc:** John Prescott  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Fwd: Important - Academic Affiliations SECVA Letter

Aloha Dr. Shulkin,

I am responding to the following note and associated attachment in which you request suggestions for how the VA might work more closely with the academic community. In Hawaii, we share the national physician shortage and are also compromised by the challenges of recruiting to a small island state in the middle of the Pacific. The high cost of living, remoteness from family (if from the continent), and lower physician reimbursement than most states, complicate the physician recruitment and retention challenges we face. The University of Hawaii John A. Burns is part of a health provider ecosystem in Hawaii. Our role is multipart, but includes the training of medical students and residents.

Historically, we have gone through cycles of disruptive recruitment of physicians by the VA system in Hawaii. Rather than contracting through the University Health Partners of Hawaii (the practice plan for the University of Hawaii) to recruit physicians (as part of the practice plan who will work at the VA), the VA will periodically enter a bidding war for existing physician faculty at the University of Hawaii John A. Burns, thus compromising our ability to retain educators who will train the next generation of medical students and residents for Hawaii.

We would sincerely appreciate it if the VA system leadership in Hawaii would work with the University Health Partners of Hawaii (formerly known as UCERA) to proactively identify graduating residents in our local residency programs or former medical students who trained on the mainland (and who wish to return to Hawaii) for recruitment. If these young physicians can be recruited through the University Health Partners of Hawaii, we can then support recruitment and retention by offering a faculty appointment and a blend of community teaching hospital/clinic practice that will complement working at the VA.

Many of our graduates would have an interest in such a blended position and would accept a new faculty post at a reasonable compensation rate. Unfortunately, when the VA hires away one of our seasoned faculty members at a premium salary and benefit package, our faculty practice loses a great educator who likely would have trained many other individuals looking for similar employment.

Finally, the process of VA procurement (of physician personnel) needs enhancement. The arms length involvement of the VA service chief in the procurement process is major detriment to attaining rapid, efficient hires.

Jerris

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **John Prescott** <[jprescott@aamc.org](mailto:jprescott@aamc.org)>

Date: Tue, Mar 28, 2017 at 12:14 PM

Subject: Important - Academic Affiliations SECVA Letter

To: COD <[cod@aamc.org](mailto:cod@aamc.org)>

Dear Colleagues,

As I was traveling home yesterday from the COD Spring meeting, I received a request from David Shulkin, M.D., the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, to distribute the attached letter to the COD.

Today Dr. Shulkin addressed representatives from COTH who were meeting at the AAMC and reaffirmed “the Department’s commitment to preserving and enhancing the relationships we share, ensure that we collaborate on transforming VA, and reduce the barriers of doing business with the Department.”

Please take a moment and read his letter and more importantly write to him with your thoughts and ideas “to improve our relationship with our partners in the academic community and how to overcome the challenges and barriers that are delaying us from realizing our full potential.” He has listed his email address in the letter [David.Shulkin@va.gov](mailto:David.Shulkin@va.gov) and your suggestions will be discussed at an upcoming meeting of the VA National Academic Affiliations Council (of which I’m a member) in July. If appropriate, please copy me in on your thoughts [jprescott@aamc.org](mailto:jprescott@aamc.org) .

Thanks, and it was great seeing so many of you in NYC this past weekend.

John

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